

פרשת מקץ / Parashat Miketz

Shabbat Kislev 30, 5769, December 27, 2008
32:1-32:52 MATSATI.COM / Rightly Dividing The Word of G-d
<http://www.matsati.com> | matsati@matsati.com

5

The all sufficiency of G-d

השבועות הזה קוראים / This Week's Reading

תורה: Genesis 41:1-44:17
הפטרה: 1 Kings 3:15-4:1
הברית: Romans 10:1-13
החדשה

10 The text before us this week offers some striking statements. Following the
triennial cycle *Bereshit / Genesis 41:53 – 43:15*, the sons of Yisrael must make
their way to Mitzrayim (Egypt) to purchase food for their families because of the
severity of the famine that is occurring. While visiting Egypt they unknowingly
meet Yoseph and so follows a number of problems, (i) Yoseph calls them spies,
15 (ii) makes it appear as if they are stealing the grain they purchased and (iii) must
bring their brother Benyamin from the Promised Land to confirm their not really
spies. When they return to Yisrael (Yaakov) they grieve Yisrael because they
have been told they are not to return without Benyamin their brother. As Yisrael
sends his children back to Mitzrayim (Egypt) he prays for his children however he
20 uses the name of G-d “El Shaddai” (אל שדי) which means “The all sufficient G-
d” rather than the tetragrammaton יהוה in his prayer (see *Bereshit / Genesis
43:11-15*).

בראשית 43:11-15

11 עֲתָה שָׁבְנוּ זֶה פַעַמִּים: וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲבִיהֶם
אִם-בָּנָי אֶפְוֹא וְאֵת עֵשׂוֹ קָחוּ מִזְמַרְתֵּי הָאָרֶץ בְּכֻלֵּיכֶם
וְהוֹרִידוּ לְאִישׁ מִנְחָה מְעַט צָרִי וּמְעַט דְּבַשׁ נְכֹאֵת וְלֹא
בְטָנִים וּשְׂקָדִים: וּכְסָף מִשְׁנֵה קָחוּ בְיַדְכֶם וְאֵת-
12 הַכֶּסֶף הַמּוֹשֵׁב בְּפִי אִמְתַּחֲתֵיכֶם תְּשִׁיבוּ בְיַדְכֶם אוֹלֵי
מִשְׁנֵה הוּא: וְאֵת-אֲחֵיכֶם קָחוּ וְקוּמוּ שׁוּבוּ אֶל-הָאִישׁ:
13 שׁ וְאֵל שְׂדֵי יִתֵּן לָכֶם רְחֻמִּים לְפָנַי הָאִישׁ וְשַׁלַּח לָכֶם
אֶת-אֲחֵיכֶם אַחַר וְאֵת-בְּנֵימִן וְאֲנִי כַּאֲשֶׁר שָׁכַלְתִּי
14 שָׁכַלְתִּי: וַיִּקְחוּ הָאֲנָשִׁים אֶת-הַמִּנְחָה הַזֹּאת וּמִשְׁנֵה-
כֶּסֶף לָקְחוּ בְיַדָּם וְאֵת-בְּנֵימִן וַיִּקְמוּ וַיֵּרְדוּ מִצְרַיִם
15 וַיַּעֲמְדוּ לְפָנַי יוֹסֵף: וַיֵּרָא יוֹסֵף אֶתָם אֶת-בְּנֵימִן וַיֹּאמֶר
16

Bereshit / Genesis 43:11-15

43:11 Then their father Israel said to them, ‘If it must be so, then do this: take some of the best products of the land in your bags, and carry down to the man as a present, a little balm and a little honey, aromatic gum and myrrh, pistachio nuts and almonds. 43:12 ‘Take double the money in your hand, and take back in your hand the money that was returned in the mouth of your sacks; perhaps it was a mistake. 43:13 ‘Take your brother also, and arise, return to the man; 43:14 and may God Almighty grant you compassion in the sight of the man, so that he will release to you your other brother and Benjamin. And as for me, if I am bereaved of my children, I am bereaved.’ 43:15 So the men took this present, and they took double the money in their hand, and Benjamin; then they arose and went down to Egypt and stood before Joseph. (NASB)

25

Now if we survey the name of G-d in the form of the Tetragrammaton we find in the Masoretic text that it occurs 6,823 times. On the other hand, “El Shaddai” only occurs 48 times, 31 of which occur in the book of job alone. In fact, El Shaddai occurs only three times prior to this point in sefer Bereshit (book of Genesis). As you can see there is quite a contrast between each of the uses of the name of G-d. El Shaddai is used very infrequently which suggests there may be something to consider here by Yisrael’s choice of the name in his prayer for his sons. I would like to examine these four occurrences of the name of G-d “El Shaddai” (*Bereshit / Genesis 17:1, 28:3, 35:11, and 43:11-15*) and attempt to give a plausible explanation for the use of the name over against the Tetragrammaton in the overall flow of the Genesis narrative up to this point.

30

35

בראשית 17:1

וַיְהִי אַבְרָם בְּדַתְשָׁעִים שָׁנָה וְתִשְׁעַ שָׁנִים יוֹ
 וַיֵּרָא יְהוָה אֶל-אַבְרָם וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו אֲנִי-אֱלֹהֵי שָׁדַי הִתְהַלֵּךְ
 לְפָנַי וְהָיָה תָמִים: וְאַתְּנָה בְרִיתִי בֵינִי וּבֵינְךָ וְאַרְבָּה
 אוֹתְךָ בְּמֵאד מְאֹד: וַיִּפֹּל אַבְרָם עַל-פָּנָיו וַיְדַבֵּר אִתּוֹ

Bereshit / Genesis 17:1
 17:1 When Avram was 99 years old ADONAI appeared to Avram and said to him, "I am El Shaddai [God Almighty]. Walk in my presence and be pure-hearted. (CJB)

40

בראשית 28:3

אִשָּׁה מְבֹנֵת לָבֵן אָחִי אִמְךָ: וְאֵל שָׁדַי יְבָרֶךְ אֶתְךָ
 וַיַּפְרֶךְ וַיַּרְבֶּךָ וְהָיִיתָ לְקָהָל עַמִּים: וַיִּתְּן-לְךָ אֶת-בְּרַכְתּוֹ
 אַבְרָהָם לְךָ וּלְזֶרְעֶךָ אַתְּ לְרִשְׁתָּהּ אֶת-הָאָרֶץ מִנָּדִיךְ
 אֲשֶׁר-נָתַן אֱלֹהִים לְאַבְרָהָם: וַיִּשְׁלַח יִצְחָק אֶת-יַעֲקֹב

Bereshit / Genesis 28:3
 28:3 May El Shaddai bless you, make you fruitful and increase your descendants, until they become a whole assembly of peoples. (CJB)

בראשית 35:11

שְׁמוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל: וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ אֱלֹהִים אֲנִי אֱלֹהֵי שָׁדַי פְּרֹה וּרְבֵה
 גוֹי וּקְהָל גּוֹיִם יְהוּדָה מִמֶּנִּי וּמַלְכִים מִחֲלָצֶיךָ יֵצְאוּ:
 וְאֶת-הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר נָתַתִּי לְאַבְרָהָם וּלְיִצְחָק לְךָ אֶתְנַנֶּה
 וּלְזֶרְעֶךָ אַחֲרָיִךְ אֶתֵּן אֶת-הָאָרֶץ: וַיַּעַל מֵעֵלְיוֹ אֱלֹהִים

Bereshit / Genesis 35:11
 35:11 God further said to him, "I am El Shaddai. Be fruitful and multiply. A nation, indeed a group of nations, will come from you; kings will be descended from you. (CJB)

45

Let’s start by looking at the Hebrew name for G-d. To begin the Hebrew name of G-d “El” comes from a root word meaning “might, strength, and power.” Reading through the scriptures the primary usage of this root are (i) “god” referring to pagan or false gods, (ii) G-d, the true G-d of Yisrael and (iii) the

50

mighty, referring to men or angels. When El (אל) is used in reference to the true G-d of Yisrael it is qualified by additional words that further define the meaning that distinguish him from the false gods of the land. These titles for G-d are called the “construct forms.” In our text this week we find the construct form of the name of G-d as “El Shaddai” which means the all sufficient G-d. In *Bereshit / Genesis 17:1* and *35:55* G-d chose to reveal Himself using this distinctive name.

To gain a little further understanding on the name of G-d let’s look at a few other translations. The Septuagint (a Greek translation of the Tanach) the translators thought Shaddai come from the root verb Shadad that means “to overpower” or “to destroy” and thus most modern translations including the KJV translate El Shaddai as “G-d Almighty.” Likewise in the Latin Vulgate, the word translated for Shaddai is “omnipotens” which is the where we derive the English word “omnipotent.” Now in the rabbinic literature, some of the Chazal (חז"ל) believed Shaddai is a contraction of a phrase. For example, modern Judaism believes Shadai is an acronym for the phrase “Shomer daltot Yisrael” (שומר דלתות ישראל) which means “Guardian of the doors of Yisrael.” This is illustrated by an abbreviation on the mezuzah as the letter Shin (ש). In addition to that, it is interesting that Yaakov’s blessing in *Bereshit / Genesis 49:25* indicates that Shaddai might be related to the word for breasts.

בראשית 49:25

25 אָבִיר יַעֲקֹב מִשָּׁם רָעָה אָבֵן יִשְׂרָאֵל: מֵאֵל אָבִיר
וַיְעוֹרֶךְ וְאֵת שְׂדֵי וַיְבָרְכֶךָ בְּרִכַּת שָׁמַיִם מֵעַל בְּרִכַּת
26 תְּהוֹם רִבְצָת תַּחַת בְּרִכַּת שְׂדֵים וְרֵחַם: בְּרִכַּת אָבִיר

Bereshit / Gensis 49:25
49:25 From the God of your father who helps you, And by the Almighty who blesses you With blessings of heaven above, Blessings of the deep that lies beneath, Blessings of the breasts and of the womb. (NASB)

The reference here maybe is indicating sufficiency and nourishment (for example “blessings of the breasts and of the womb” (בְּרִכַּת שְׂדֵים וְרֵחַם)). The idea is that G-d is completely sufficient to nurture the fledgling nation of Yisrael into maturity. In *Bereshit / Genesis 17:1* G-d uses the name “El Shaddai” to describe himself and then goes on to refer to multiplying Avraham’s offspring (see *Bereshit / Genesis 17:2*). What can we conclude from the four uses of the name of El Shaddai? El Shaddai is exclusively in reference to the three Patriarchs Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov, support for this is found in *Shmot / Exodus 6:2-3* which states that El Shaddai was the primary name by which G-d was known to the founders of Yisrael.

שמות 3-2:6

וַיְדַבֵּר אֱלֹהִים אֶל-מֹשֶׁה וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו אֲנִי יְהוָה: 2
 וְאָרָא אֶל-אַבְרָהָם אֶל-יִצְחָק וְאֶל-יַעֲקֹב בְּאֵל שַׁדַּי 3
 וּשְׁמִי יְהוָה לֹא נִדְעִיתִי לָהֶם: 4 וְגַם הִקְמַתִי אֶת-בְּרִיתִי 4

Shmot / Exodus

6:2

6:2 God spoke further to Moses and said to him, 'I am the Lord; 6:3 and I appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as God Almighty, but by My name, Lord, I did not make Myself known to them. (NASB)

95 The sufficiency of G-d in the name El Shaddai can best be understood by looking upon it from a covenant perspective specifically the Avrahamic covenant. The Avrahamic covenant is first given in the text (sefer Bereshit) along with various repetitions or reiterations of the covenant where the wording changes slightly but the basic components remain the same. The order of the blessings are different but the main covenant texts are found in *Bereshit / Genesis 12:1-3, 15:7, 18:18, 22:18, and 28:14*. Let's summarize a few of these covenant reiterations.

Bereshit / Genesis 12:1-3

1. Make you a great nation
2. Bless you
3. Make your name great in order to be a blessing
4. Bless those who bless you and curse those who curse you
5. All the families will be blessed in you.

Bereshit / Genesis 22:17-18

1. Greatly bless you
2. Multiply your seed
3. Your seed shall possess the gates of your enemies
4. In your seed all the nations of the earth are blessed.

Bereshit / Genesis 26:3-4

1. Promise of G-d's presence and blessing
2. Land given to Yitzchak and his seed
3. Covenant of Avraham continues through Yitzchak and his seed
4. Multiply his descendants
5. By your seed all the nations of the earth will be blessed.

Bereshit / Genesis 28:13-14

1. The land is given to Yaakov and his seed
2. Promised the seed will be like the dust of the earth and spread out.
3. In you and in your seed all the families of the earth will be blessed.

Understanding the character of G-d through the name of El Shaddai, the all sufficient G-d, is illustrated throughout time through Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov. The blessings are not only for Avraham and his offspring but the blessings will pass through him to all the nations. The fact is the blessing was to come to all of mankind. This is suggestive that G-d will bless mankind through a significant unification where all will be touched by a single family or nation, the

135 nation of Avraham. The Shelachim (Apostles) understood this fulfillment and
sufficiency of G-d in the book of Acts. The work of the Messiah was the
mechanism by which this promise would be realized and it was the sufficiency of
G-d which brought all of this to pass.

140 Clearly we can see the all sufficiency of G-d in the scriptures and ultimately in
Yeshua the Messiah. Do you think the Patriarchs recognized this in El Shaddai in
the covenant promises He made with them? Read through *Acts* chapters *13, 32,*
and 33, how do you think the Shelachim (Apostles) understood the promises
made to the patriarchs, specifically how they linked the promises of the covenant,
145 with the commission of the Messiah Yeshua to “make disciples of all nations” and
the all sufficiency of G-d? Finally, no matter what the circumstance that might
have come your way, can you see the all sufficiency of El Shaddai in your life?

150

155

160

165

170

175

Be Blessed in Yeshua our Messiah!

הללויה לאדוננו מורנו ורבינו ישוע מלך המשיח לעולם ועד:

Hallelujah for our Lord, our Teacher, our Rabbi,

“Yeshua” King Messiah forever and ever

180